



FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES

August 29, 2025

Welcome to the 2025 - 2026 School Year!

Welcome to a new school year!



Your hard work ensures that every student receives the nutrition they need to succeed. Thank you for your dedication and care!

Please contact our DESE Food and Nutrition Staff if you have any questions during the school year.

- **Food and Nutrition Services Staff Directory**
- **Food and Nutrition Services Region Contacts**
 - *Some counties have shifted regions due to the Missouri region redistribution. Please review the highlighted changes and take note if you have a new regional contact. The **region map** will be available soon.*

Save the Date! October 6 - 7, 2025 - Columbia, Missouri

DESE School Food Service Managers and Directors Fall Workshop

Click [here](#) or the image below to register or see additional information including the daily schedule and location details. **Registration closes September 19th!**



SAVE THE DATE

What: School Food Service Directors and Managers are invited to attend a workshop that will focus on Student Eligibility, Food Service Finance, Procurement, and Meal Pattern.

Where: Stoney Creek Hotel and Conference Center, Columbia

When: October 6-7

Register here by September 19



2025-2026 School Nutrition Program (SNP) Application Packet Information

Application Packets are open and ready for the Authorized Representative to complete for the 25-26 SY. To access your packet, please login to **DESE Application Sign-In** (DAS) and complete the Application Packet for the 25-26 SY. **Please note:** you will be unable to submit a claim for reimbursement until your packet has been approved. In order for your packet to be reviewed for approval, you will need to click the Submit for Approval button. For assistance with your packet, please contact your **regional Nutrition Program Specialist**.

The **Food Safety Inspections Report** is available within your SNP Application and this is due on **September 15**. This report **must** be completed prior to submitting the first claim. See the image below for instructions on how to access the report. For additional due dates please review the **Food and Nutrition Services Calendar**.



Food Safety Inspections

To access the Food Safety Inspections report, click Applications in the dark blue bar then Food Safety Inspections from the list of applications.

Click Modify. Once data has been entered for each building, click Save. Click Edit to return to the Food Safety Inspection, or click Finish to return to the Application Packet.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Building Food Safety Inspections". It includes fields for "000-000 ABC School District" and "Address". Below these are instructions for entering inspection data for the 2025-2026 school year. The form has a table with columns for "BUILDING NAME AND ADDRESS", "1. Safety Inspections performed in 2025-2026 for each building indicating either 'Good' or 'Bad', indicate reason in 26.", "26. Reason for lower than last inspection conducted (check one, the most appropriate reason)", "27. Other: please describe", and "28. Other: please describe". The first row of the table is for "0000 Elementary School".

Food and Nutrition Services



Special Provisions and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

If you are new to CEP, welcome! Enjoy not having to collect and go through Free and Reduced Meal Applications. If you have not completed your Web Application for SY 25/26, please do so as soon as possible and attach your signed Policy Statement if you are new or going into a new cycle. Also watch your claims for the correct percentages on your free and paid meals based on your CEP schedule.



Fresh Fruit and Vegetable (FFVP) Snack Program participants should start giving students snacks as soon as you can in the new school year to use your grant money amounts only available through the end of September.

New Provision 2 districts operating in a base year, collect as many free and reduced meal applications as you can and run DirectMatch reports weekly to ensure the highest free and reduced numbers as you can in your base year. Second year districts watch your claims to make sure you are reimbursed at the correct free and reduced numbers as your schedule reflects.



2025-2026 School Year Reimbursement Rates

You can find the 2025-2026 School Year Reimbursement Rates in the chart below or on our DESE, FNS Reimbursement Rates webpage.

National School Lunch Program

	Less than 60%	60% or More	Less than 60% + 9 Cents	60% or More + 9 Cents
Paid	\$.44	\$.46	\$.53	\$.55
Reduced Price	\$4.20	\$4.22	\$4.29	\$4.31
Free	\$4.60	\$4.62	\$4.69	\$4.71

School Breakfast Program

	Non-Severe Need	Severe Need
Paid	\$.40	\$.40
Reduced Price	\$2.16	\$2.64
Free	\$2.46	\$2.94

After School Snack Program

Paid	\$.11
Reduced Price	\$.63
Free	\$1.26

Special Milk Program

Paid	\$.2675
Free	Average Cost per 1/2 pint

Donated Foods Program

per student lunch \$.44

Important School Nutrition Requirements, Resources & Reminders

Quick Links on the DESE Food and Nutrition Services Website

Here are a few quick links to help you transition into the new school year!

- [Food and Nutrition Services Homepage](#)
- [Yearly Calendar](#)
- [Meal Counts and Claims](#)
- [Food Allergy Information](#)
- [Newsletters](#)

Administrative Reviews

The Administrative Review list is now posted on the DESE FNS website – **Administrative State Agency Reviews**. In addition to a comprehensive list of schools to be reviewed in the upcoming school year, we have also provided a list of schools that will be receiving a review via CN Resource. If you are on the **2025-2026 Schedule of Administrative Reviews**, you will be receiving an AR in the upcoming school year. If you are also listed on the Reviews to be Conducted by CN Resource, this means that you will be receiving a review from CN Resource, rather than DESE Food and Nutrition Services. Those that are on the **CN Resource list**, please be on the lookout for correspondence from CN Resource as they will be the ones to reach out in regards to your upcoming review.

Updates to School Nutrition Standards

The **updates** to school nutrition standards will provide children with less sugars and sodium, which are too high in the American diet, and continue to provide nutritious foods including fruits, veggies, and whole grains. [Learn more](#).

2025-2026 Prospective Waiver

Using authority under Section 12(l) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA), 42 U.S.C 1760(l), MO DESE was approved for a **SY25-26 prospective waiver** to allow local program operators to quickly respond to unanticipated building closures by providing flexibilities for non-congregate meal service, meal service times, parent/guardian pick up, offer versus serve (NSLP only), meal service at school sites (SSO). With these waivers in place, DESE may approve program operators to serve non-congregate meals for up to 10 consecutive operating days without prior notice to FNS. Oftentimes, operators experience a short-term disaster/emergency. Examples are flooding, broken pipes, gas leaks, blizzards, school lockdowns for various reasons, building closures, loss of electricity resulting in building closure. All these situations happen very quickly. Without the Prospective waiver you run the risk of not being able to get waiver approval in time to provide the operator the ability to serve and claim meals and they may miss out on reimbursement.

Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Guidance and Tool- Under the 2025 Appropriations Act, for SY 2025-2026, only LEAs that had a negative balance in the nonprofit school food service account as of June 30, 2024, shall be required to establish a price for paid lunches according to the PLE provisions. Schools may use the **PLE exemption survey** and the **PLE tool for school year 2025-2026**.

Free and Reduced Price Application and Direct Certification Information and Procedures 2025-26- is now available on the **DESE Food and Nutrition Services** website under **Free and Reduced Price Information and Handbooks**. Please refer to the **Free and Reduced Application and Direct Certification Information and Procedures** and the **Frequently Asked Questions** document pertaining to the Free and Reduced Application process. The **2025-26 Special Milk Program** letter, attachments and guidance have been sent to be added to the website and will be available soon.

Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025: Effect on Child Nutrition Programs- On May 14, 2025, FNS released **SP 13-2025**. Consistent with the guiding principles regarding nutrition programs identified by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Brooke Rollins to clarify statutory, regulatory, and administrative requirements, this memo, attached, provides guidance from the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (Public Law 119-4).

FY 2025 Equipment Assistance Grant Update

The FY 2025 Equipment Grant allocations and information have not been announced yet. Once it is announced and our application is approved by USDA, the application will remain open for a minimum of 3 weeks and we will also send out an email, post on the web and in an upcoming newsletter when it is available.

Excess Balance

The Food Service Account is a “non-profit” account or fund, this means that the account is allowed to carry a three month average operating cost.

Example of calculating an excess balance:

- We calculate an excess balance by taking the closing balance (i.e. \$411,211.15) and subtracting the three month balance (i.e. \$225,968.28). This gives you the excess balance that you need to “spend down”. If the LEA receives an Excess Balance Letter- the LEA must respond with a written (on district letter head) plan on how the excess funds will be spent.
 - To bring the balance in line with program requirements, we suggest immediate consideration of one or more of the following: (1) improve the

quality of food offered; (2) purchase needed movable equipment items and supplies; (3) pay expenses for food service personnel to attend workshops, conferences, or trainings; and (4) to achieve compliance with the Healthy Hunger Kids Free Act you may not arbitrarily divert funds accumulated in your food service operation; however, you may consider indirect cost recovery. (5) Paid Lunch Equity Exemption

If your LEA has an excess balance on the SY 23-24 School Nutrition Program Financial Report, the Authorized Representative should have received a notification letter from Heidi Garlin. The LEA will need to submit the written response/plan for reducing the program balance and the estimated date of completion. After the excess balance is depleted, the LEA must submit detailed documentation explaining steps used to reduce expenditure with the amounts expended and all receipts if applicable.

If spend down plans include Capital Expenditures (per 2 CFR 200.1), a Capital Expenditure Request must also be submitted and approved. Note: The equipment threshold for the State of Missouri increased to \$5,000.

Farm to School



Your school can apply for Local Food for Schools (LFS) funds to purchase additional apples by visiting the LFS website. Simply [click here](#) or scan the QR code to get going!

Here's to a crunchy, healthy, and local celebration!
Let's Keep Growing Forward Together!

Barbara Shaw
Barbara Shaw, Coordinator
Food and Nutrition Services + The Growing Forward Team



Local Food for Schools (LFS) Grant

The LFS grant was **NOT** impacted by the federal termination of grant programs. DESE **will continue** to operate and distribute funds for this current LFS grant. DESE **will not** be receiving Local Food for Schools and Child Care (LFSCC), this grant was terminated. These are two separate grants.

Please review our **Let's Talk Tuesday Webinar on LFS** for additional information and how to apply for available funding.

How to Apply:

1. Review the training recording.
2. Complete the request for applications.
3. Submit written plan describing how you will spend the funds.

Scan the QR code to get started!



MO DESE Food & Nutrition Services
foodandnutritionservices@dese.mo.gov

USDA Foods Update

Delivery Fees for Direct Delivery and Fee For Service

Due to changes beyond our control, there will be a delivery fee for all school districts that receive donated foods. Delivery costs have steadily increased over the past 4 years and our source of funding used to pay warehousing services is no longer adequate to completely cover all the cost. All school districts will be responsible for a small delivery fee to receive direct delivery and Fee for Service (FFS) items. Beginning on October 1, 2025, public schools will be billed a **\$2.25** per case delivery fee by Gold Star Foods for Direct Delivery and Fee For Service items. Starting August 1, 2025, private schools will be billed **\$5.25** per case delivery fee by Gold Star Foods for Direct Delivery and Fee For Service items.

Please rest assured, our Donated Foods Team is committed to supporting our schools. If warehousing costs and funding allows us in the future to revisit and eliminate or reduce this fee, we will do so. Please reach out to us if you have questions.



Let's Talk Tuesdays Return

"USDA Foods Essentials for the New School Year"

September 23, 2:00 PM

We are offering a webinar to provide updates and information for the upcoming school year.

Cancellations, Delays and Substitutions

While most of our direct delivery foods are being delivered as scheduled, we have some products that have been delayed or cancelled. If there are direct delivery items you requested on your packet, but have not received as scheduled, please consult the **Canceled/Delayed USDA Foods Direct Delivery Orders** page. If the item is not listed as cancelled or delayed, please reach out to our USDA Foods team at donatedfoods@dese.mo.gov.

- **100348 Frozen Corn, 100225 Diced Pears, and 100206 Apple Slices**
 - August through October trucks were not available or delayed. They are now expected to arrive at Gold Star in mid-October, making them available for October or November delivery.
- **100125 Turkey Roasts**
 - One truck of turkey roasts is delayed. It is now expected to arrive at Gold Star in mid-October, making them available for October or November delivery. We did receive an August truck, which will cover the majority of orders, but there will be a delay for some LEAs.
- **100362 Refried Beans**
 - The truck for August distribution was delayed until mid-October. However, we do have one truck coming in August that will meet some of the demand.
- **100256 Strawberry Cups**
 - Four trucks that were scheduled to arrive at Gold Star in January and February have been cancelled. This means that cases that were on the packet for February and March delivery will not be fulfilled.
- **100158 Ground Beef**
 - Trucks for September and October distribution are now expected to arrive at Gold Star in mid-October, making them available for October and November orders.

Value Letters

The SY 24-25 Value Letters have been posted on our DESE website and an email was sent to your authorized representative informing them that the letter is available at **SY 24-25 Value Letter**. This letter provides the value of all USDA Foods that were delivered to your district during this past school year. This includes Direct Delivery (brown box), DOD Fresh, Fee For Service and Net Off Invoice entitlement. It also includes any bonus entitlement received during the year.

Bonus Direct Delivery for 25/26 SY

We are again offering Bonus Direct Delivery items that you may select and add to your Gold Star orders. To view available bonus items, log into the **Gold Star website**. On the left panel, click on Advertisements under the USDA Direct Delivery Header. Then request the items and quantities you would like. Bonus items, once approved, will be added to your Live Inventory and automatically shipped to your district on your next Gold Star delivery. More information and instructions on this advertisement feature can be found on the USDA Foods website under **Gold Star Training Videos – Advertisements**.

Please make a note of the quantity available on the original advertisements page before you click the request button, and please don't request more than what is available. If you see items with a zero or negative quantity, they are not actually available.

Past Newsletters

Missed a past newsletter or need to access them again? You can find them all on our **Food and Nutrition Services Newsletter page!**





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